

CONNECTIONS™

Where public health meets,
exchanges new ideas and
solves public health problems.

Integrated Child Health Information Systems Community of Practice

UP CLOSE IN PORTLAND

The Connections community of practice on Integrated Child Health Information Systems met in Portland, OR, in June for a close-up look at Oregon's FamilyNet Data System, management and proposed communication plan. More than 30 people representing 10 health information systems integration projects from across the country also explored the vision for integrated information systems and the life cycle of integration projects.

The Rhode Island Department of Health and KidsNet staff will host the next site visit, September 23-25 in Providence, Rhode Island. The three-day visit will focus on KidsNet, including technology assessment findings and data management, integration of Vital Records and Newborn Screening, confidentiality policies, and provider relations. Other sessions include a discussion on the value of integrating systems from the perspectives of the various stakeholders.

OREGON'S FAMILYNET: IT TAKES A TEAM

Backed by support from its governor, Oregon is one of several states now making a statewide effort to coordinate the multitude of health, education and family services for children. In the late 1980s, the Oregon Department of Human Services and other key agencies that coordinate services for Oregon's children began a long-term, collaborative planning process to replace the existing fragmented approach.

The planning process for this ambitious undertaking received a boost from 1999 legislation supporting integration of services for children ages 0-8, and again in 2001, with passage of the Oregon Children's Plan (OCP), which focuses resources on prevention instead of intervention, supported by an integrated data system. Assuring preservation of confidentiality and data security within the system was critical in winning support for the OCP.

FamilyNet is just one part of the comprehensive Early Childhood Data System Project under OCP.

When all of its components are rolled out, FamilyNet will be a population-based system coordinating screening, assessment, referral and services. The system will protect client/patient data while facilitating service delivery in 36 counties, and providing maternal and child health programs with information for assessment and program evaluation purposes. When completed, the FamilyNet data system will link information from vital records, WIC, newborn hearing and newborn metabolic screening, immunization, family planning, and school-based health centers through a "client master." Ultimately, providers will have secure access through a web interface to data on clients/patients who have granted that access. Launch of the immunization and WIC components is anticipated this winter, and the rest of the system will begin to roll out next year.

“Good technology depends on good communication of the business needs for an information systems project.”

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Oregon's FamilyNet – continued from page 1

INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROJECT MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

<http://pmo.hr.state.or.us> This web site of the Oregon Department of Human Services, Office of Information Services, Project Management Office, offers tools that increase the likelihood of project success. Five phases -- initiating, planning, executing, controlling and closing -- are broken into 20 detailed processes.

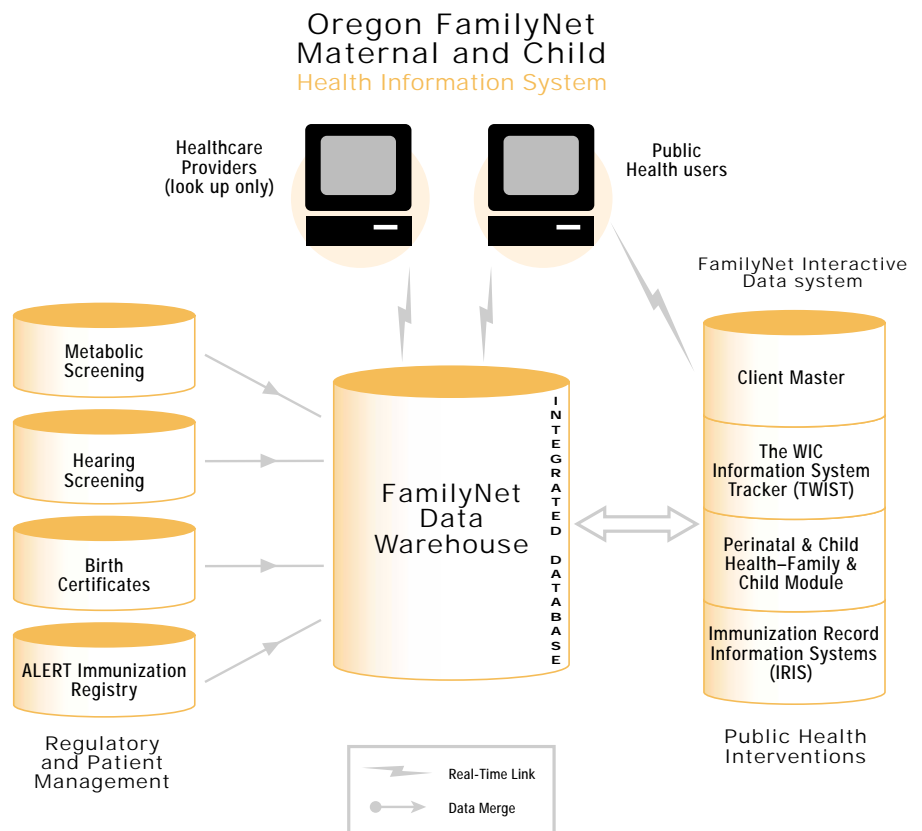
www.pmi.org The Project Management Institute (PMI) provides leadership in the development of standards for the practice of the project management profession throughout the world. Includes resources for education and training.

www.TotalSystemsEducation.com An affiliate of Project Management Institute, offers courses in project management.

Project Management Memory Jogger
Paula Martin and Karen Tate,
GOAL/QPC, 1997. 171 pp.

A pocket guide for project teams describes in non-technical language a process for managing projects. Chapters include *Creating Successful Projects*, *How to Create a Project Charter*, *How to Work Together as a Team*, *How to Create a Project Plan*, *Doing the Project*, and *How to Close Out the Project*. Order: www.goalqpc.com

The success of a complex, high-profile project like FamilyNet hinges in great measure on communication, leadership and program management. In Oregon, FamilyNet is fortunate to have the support of an executive sponsor, Donalda Dodson, Administrator, Oregon Department of Human Services. She has promoted the vision for the integration project and has assumed responsibility for educating state officials and legislators who understand the necessity of integrating systems, but also want assurance that the safeguards are in place to assure privacy, confidentiality and quality.



MCH Data Systems Coordinator Sherry Spence agrees that integration projects are not about IT, but about “teamwork and communicating within the constraints of time, scope and cost.” In Oregon, project management tools are required to increase the likelihood that state information systems projects will produce a solution for the specified business issue within these constraints. The Family and Child Module of the FamilyNet project employed the “chartering” process to “get people on the same page,” says Spence. This process focuses on business needs, identifying key partners, roles and responsibilities, expectations and limits, decision-making, timeline and costs. Although the process required substantial investment of time, Spence notes that “payback has been very high.” Dodson agrees. “Good technology depends on good communication of the business needs for an information systems project.”

COMMUNICATING THE BENEFITS OF A HEALTH DATA SYSTEM

Families and health care professionals across Oregon, as well as public health officials, will benefit from the information that FamilyNet, Oregon's integrated maternal and newborn health information system, will provide. But the idea of a new statewide system that tracks maternal and child health data naturally raises questions in the minds of parents and providers. Is the information secure and confidential? Is participation voluntary or required? How will the information be used? Will providers be burdened by collecting information? Will it be time-consuming to explain to parents?

The staff of FamilyNet recognized the need to develop a comprehensive communication plan to provide clear, consistent information about the benefits of integrated health information system to providers and families. With funding from All Kids Count, they engaged the services of a marketing consultant and research and creative teams to conduct focus groups with key stakeholder groups and develop a communication plan to educate them.

The consultants presented a comprehensive, phased plan to FamilyNet staff that included identity development – a proposed name and tagline, logotype, imagery and messages – that would be used in public relations, advertising and education materials. Proposed communication vehicles included publications targeted to expectant mothers and parents of young children, publications for providers, a video, a brochure, trade show exhibit, and a web site.

Just as the technical aspects of the FamilyNet system are tested before implementation, the creative approach of the communication plan will be tested before rolling out, and similarly, follow-up research will be conducted. Notes Sherry Spence, "At first, people asked us, "Why do you need a communication plan for a data system?" Now, they are saying, "People need to understand how data integration can help them get the services they need. Should we expand this to cover more than FamilyNet?""

CONNECTIONS MEMBERS

Connections members provide a grounding for All Kids Count as it works to develop a shared vision for integrated child health information systems. It brings the experiences of those involved in the day-to-day development of these systems into the crafting of the vision. Member agencies and organizations include:

CalOptima (Medicaid managed care for Orange County, CA)

Iowa Department of Public Health

Kansas Integrated Public Health System

Maine Department of Human Services

Michigan Department of Community Health

Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

New York City Department of Health

Oregon Department of Human Services

Rhode Island Department of Health

Santa Clara County (CA) Department of Health

Utah Department of Health



The Integrated Child Health Information System community of practice is a program of All Kids Count, which is supported by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to foster development of integrated child health information systems.

Connections communities of practice bring public health practitioners together to meet, exchange new ideas and solve public health problems. They are a program of the Center for Innovation in Health Information Systems, which is committed to improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities, especially children, through strategic application and management of information technology.

The Center for Innovation is a component of The Task Force for Child Survival and Development.

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www.connectionszone.org
www.centerforinnovation.org
www.allkidscount.org



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The Sound Of CONNECTIONS

New Perspectives on Integration Partners

When Connections members met in January in New York City, Amy Metroka, manager of New York City's Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), was among the NYC staff who presented on the development and implementation of their integrated system, the Master Child Index (MCI). For three days Connections members learned about the two-year intensive effort to integrate the immunization and lead screening databases.

For program staff involved in the day-to-day development and implementation of a complex information system, opportunities to reflect on what services should be integrated and what can be accomplished can be rare commodities. The Connections visit to the Oregon integration project in June presented an opportunity for Amy and other NYC integration project staff to find out more about what other public health programs and integration projects are doing, and to step back and think about their own next steps.

"The Oregon site visit was an opportunity for me to think about what the NYC Master Child Index (MCI) will do next," says Amy. "What more can we give providers, our key stakeholders? What about health plans and other public health programs?"

Oregon's presentation on the Oregon Children's Plan, which aims to coordinate health, education and social service programs, opened thinking about linking with programs outside of the health department.

Returning to NYC, Amy says discussions will be held with many different potential partners: the state immunization registry and Medicaid Management Information System (MMIS), as well as the state's newborn screening database and WIC program. Within the city, the Board of Education, foster care program, and Early Intervention Program – all of these share NYC's goal of improving the health of children.

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Address correction requested